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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 DJIBOUTI 001588

SIPDIS

FOR CA/EX, AF/EX, AF/EX/DJ, OIG/ISP, M/FSI/SPAS, CA/VO,
CA/FPP, CA/OCS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CMGT](#) [CVIS](#) [CASC](#) [KFRD](#) [ASIG](#) [AFSI](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: CONSULAR NARRATIVE FY04 - DJIBOUTI

¶1. (U) A) Please identify the following:

Consular Section Chief name, ETD, direct office telephone number and e-mail: Andrea K. Lewis, ETD: October 2006 Telephone: (253) 35-39-95 ext: 2203, e-mail: LewisAK@state.gov

- Deputy Consular Section Chief name, ETD, direct office telephone number and e-mail: None.

- Back-up Consular Officer name (if this is a one-officer consular section), direct office telephone number and e-mail: Primary Back-up Consular Officer: Tiffany Bartish, Telephone: (253) 35-39-95 ext: 2220, e-mail: BartishTM@state.gov.

- Consular Section Fax number (please provide both IVG numbers and standard phone numbers including country and city codes). Fax: (253) 35-39-40, IVG telephone: 597-0000 (There is no IVG Fax line.)

B) Do you have sufficient staff to meet consular MPP objectives? (If you believe you do not, describe steps you have taken to maximize staff efficiency. Note any special circumstances at your post that hinder productivity. Specify the number, type, and grade of personnel you would need in order to fully meet MPP objectives). Add any comments you might have on the effectiveness of training of new personnel (such as Congen, FSI language training, etc.)

- The demands of the Consular section require a full-time dedicated officer. However, the only assigned officer also holds a Pol/Mil portfolio, as well as additional reporting duties.

- We have sufficient FSN staff, but our senior FSN is retiring this year and an FSN-7 replacement will have to be hired for IVs. The other two staff members are both new, and need significant training. One of the two left on maternity leave two months after she was hired (due to complications, the leave was significantly earlier than expected) and she has not yet returned. We are doing onsite training, but training has been unstructured and the knowledge transfer has been slow.

C) Do you have sufficient space to meet consular MPP objectives? (If you believe you do not, describe the nature of the space limitations. Note steps post has taken to address these limitations, including development of design proposals, allocation of post funds, requests for OBO or CA funding, etc.)

- The consular space is insufficient. The waiting room is designed to have individuals sitting less than two meters from the only interview window. Compounding this situation, is the lack of microphones; the net result is that clients in the waiting room necessarily overhear all conversations at the interview window.

- The physical layout of the consular workspace is badly designed, resulting in no direct access or line of sight from the office to the rest of the section where the FSNs work, and where the files and the cash register are kept. A proposal with alternative floorplans has been submitted to CA for funding consideration under the Consular Improvement Initiative.

- There is only one window in the consular section to handle all interviews, cashier transactions, AmCit services, as well as any routine inquiries.

D) Describe any management practices (such as off-site fee collection, use of a user pays call center, courier passback, post hosted web appointment system, business programs) that post has instituted in the past year. Are these management practices effective? Also, please list any management practices that have been discontinued in the past year, citing reasons for their termination.

- No new management practices have been initiated or discontinued in the past year.

E) Please advise whether and why post might benefit from a Consular Management Assistance Team (CMAT) visit. (By year's end, CMAT's will have visited since their inception

nearly 60 posts. If a CMAT visited your post over the past year, please summarize any benefits and what steps, if any, could be taken to further enhance the productivity of CMAT visits.)

- A CMAT visit would be welcome. All the current FSNs as well as the Consular Chief of Section have less than six months consular experience. The five-month gap between the last Consular Officer and the current Officer was filled by a succession of WAE TDYers with no overlap. A CMAT team could assist in pointing out efficiencies in procedures or processes that might normally have passed on through institutional knowledge.

Systems:

F) Do you have the equipment you need to meet consular MPP objectives? (If you believe you do not, describe the equipment you need and efforts you have made to obtain it.)

- Current equipment is adequate to meet mission objectives.

G) How would you rate your consular section's satisfaction with automated consular systems (excellent, good, average, poor)? Are there any unresolved software or hardware issues? How do you rate the training of post personnel both within the consular section and in Management/IM on the use and support of Consular systems (excellent, good, average, poor)? What types of assistance would you need from the next training and refresher teams coming from the consular systems division to assist consular system users? Please also comment on the quality of assistance provided by the CA Overseas Help Desk.

- Consular section satisfaction with the automated systems is good. A significant benefit can be derived from learning best ways to use it. The Consular Officer was surprised to receive an email advising that the section was not using the automated passport system. The Officer was unaware of post's capability. Training is rated as poor since staff members present at the time of installation claim they were unaware of the capability. After figuring out how to use it, its automated process is immensely appreciated.

- Attempting to run reports or gather data from our automated systems for the Consular Workload Statistics System proved to be a frustrating exercise that yielded unreliable results. We returned to manually adding totals from a year's worth of receipts to estimate consular statistics.

- Djibouti would appreciate an automated systems training team to show us what systems are available, and how to use them effectively. A team from Washington came in June, but given the turnover in personnel we have requested an additional Orkand training visit, tentatively scheduled for February 5, 2005.

H) Some posts have recently begun scanning 2-D barcodes to input DS-156 information into consular systems. Please comment on other forms you would like to see automated and explain why.

- Any systems that could reduce or better track paperwork involved in Visas 92s and 93s would reduce section's workload tremendously.

ACS:

I) What aspects of your ACS work are the most demanding?

- Determining legitimate claims to citizenship - this often has to happen before assistance with other citizen issues can be rendered.

- Passport applications are not challenging, but are the most time consuming part of our ACS work.

- American military personnel from the local-based military camp take "field trips" to the embassy to request routine ACS activities that could be handled by phone or by mail, or to inquire about issues not handled by Embassy Djibouti's Consular section (such as Djiboutian visas).

J) Describe the impact that added responsibilities for provision of victims assistance as well as reporting requirements (for example, in death cases and for serious crimes) have had on your workload.

- The section has had very few cases of victims' assistance. Those few cases have often focus on determining a valid claim to U.S. citizenship. Reporting our first death case became difficult, and continues as an open file six months after the death. The death was a U.S. citizen military contractor (not subject to the local SOFA) and the death and repatriation of remains were handled by the military and only reported to post after the fact. The case remains open

because the military has not yet released all the details.

Visas:

K) What aspects of your NIV work are the most demanding?

- Socio-economic status is not necessarily a good indicator of likelihood of an applicant to return.

- A recent surge in third country nationals from Eastern Europe employed by the U.S. military contracting firm Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR) has increased our NIV demand.

L) Describe the impact that post-9/11 changes in NIV processing, such as special processing requirements, SEVIS, etc. have had on your workflow, including the amount of time it takes to conduct an interview.

- Following 9/11, requirements for name clearances from Washington increased the workload and the waiting time for visas.

M) Please comment on the impact that the fingerprinting requirement has had on consular space, processing time, and relations with your host country.

- No discernable impact. A single fingerprint scanner was installed at the only interview window, and takes up no significant space. Fingerprinting appears to be accepted as a matter of course. The only pushback has been from lower-level government functionaries who remain subject to the fingerprinting requirement.

N) What aspects of your IV work are the most demanding? (Discussion should address any backlogs and their causes).

- Visas 92 and 93 are our most time consuming cases. The majority of these cases are Somali. There is no backlog, but cases frequently take years to adjudicate due to a severe lack of documentation, difficulties contacting the applicants, and the wait for DNA test results. We also have a high fraud rate, exacerbated by fluid family structure and differing definitions of family relationships (children are frequently raised by relatives, and informally "adopted" children are regularly petitioned as IR-2s or F2s.)

O) If applicable, please describe the impact of the DV program on your workload.

- Section does not handle DV cases. Djiboutian DV winners apply to Addis Ababa.

P) What percentage of your NIV and IV applicants are third country nationals (TCNs)? From what countries are they? Do they speak a different language than post's designated language? If so, how do you communicate with them?

- Approximately half our NIV applicants and 90% of our IV applicants (including 92s and 93s) are TCNs. The IVs are all Somali nationals who come to Djibouti because there is no U.S. mission in Somalia. They speak Somali, which is not a designated language at post (French) but is spoken by all consular FSNs, who translate for the Consular officer.

- The NIV cases are more varied, including either local residents from Indian citizenship or employees for the U.S. military contracting firm Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR). The KBR employees mostly come from the former Yugoslavia (Croatia and Macedonia). They all speak English.

Passport:

Q) Discuss how your post has been affected by the Overseas Photodigitized Passports program (OPDP) deployed in 2003. Please note any major adjustments you have had to make to workflow or staffing. Has the number of emergency passports issued at post decreased? If so, by how much?

- Post's first OPDP passport was just processed in November, 2004. The process went very well, and results are satisfactory. This will likely reduce time spent on passports and increase AmCit satisfaction by improving the speed of return. A serious downturn in emergency passports is not anticipated, as emergency passports have not been issued in significant numbers.

Fraud Prevention:

R) Briefly summarize the types of fraud most frequently encountered at post and programs in place to combat that fraud, including use of investigation resources, tracking systems, electronic tools, liaison and information sharing. If post has conducted a validation study, what was learned from it? Are you satisfied with the level of fraud prevention training for officers and FSNs? If not, what do you believe you need to support your efforts in this area? Do you conduct in-house fraud training? If so, who is the

targeted audience and how often is it done? Do you conduct fraud training for non-Embassy consular contacts? If so, who is the targeted audience and how often is it done? Do local authorities effectively prosecute document vendors and smugglers?

- While Djiboutian documents are usually genuine, fraud is rampant in Somali and Ethiopian documents. Somali passports are available for a low cost on the street, so passport waivers must be obtained for Somali nationals traveling to the U.S. Statements from two witnesses constitutes fact by Ethiopian law, so valid government certificates can be obtained to show any life event (e.g. birth, death, marriage) and cannot be taken at face value.

- Family fraud is also common: DNA tests are routine to verify that "spouses" are not in fact siblings, and that children are biologically related to petitioning parents.

- Djibouti has limited resources for fraud prevention and fraud detection training. The consular section lacks personnel dedicated to visa fraud investigations.

- Djiboutian officials guard documents closely. The Government would likely deal seriously with a sudden appearance of fraudulent Djiboutian documents. (Not including refugee cards, but they have little value in the Consular section.) No attempt is made to curtail fraudulent Somali or Ethiopian documents.

General:

S) Describe country conditions that affect your ability to provide consular services (infrastructure, fraud, political setting, etc.).

- Our refusal rates are lower than neighboring countries. French visas are easier to obtain than U.S. visas and have more employment appeal to the local francophone population. Most unqualified applicants apply to the French consulate instead of the U.S. Also, a significant number of would-be applicants "test the water" with a few questions about eligibility and then choose not to apply for a U.S. NIV.

- The recent installation of the U.S. military camp has increased Embassy's workload significantly. While the military forces are covered by a SOFA, AmCit services have increased in the form of passport applications, voter services, and even adoption cases. The military camp has also dramatically increased the workload of non-AmCit services due to the large number of military contractors applying for U.S. NIVs.

- Also, some of the contractors are bringing families to Djibouti. The recent worldwide attention on Djibouti as a key location in the Global War On Terrorism has increased U.S. Government personnel, attracted NGOs, and otherwise gained foreign (including U.S.) attention. According to Embassy wardens, three years ago only 50 AmCits were resident in Djibouti. Today there are more than 300 non-military citizens and more than 3,000 Americans total when DoD personnel are taken into account.

T) Describe any other issue not raised in the preceding questions that you believe to be significant to the consular section's effectiveness in handling its responsibilities.

- Post is in the process of initiating a validation study to assess NIV return rates.

- The staffing gap in the consular section and rapid succession of TDYers filling that gap have been noted by both AmCits and Djiboutian government officials. Multiple individuals from both groups have expressed relief to learn that a permanent Consular officer is assigned for the next two years.

- The Consular Section has only one officer who is also the Pol/Mil Officer as well as tasked with Somalia reporting, and refugee reporting. The consular position demands full-time attention, and should be delegated to a focused full-time officer.

- The most recent OIG report was conducted during a time when a new TDYer had just arrived to fill the staffing gap and was unfamiliar with the needs of the section. The resulting OIG interview concluded that only 20 hours of officer time per week was required to manage the Consular section. Subsequent officers have found this estimate to be grossly inadequate.

- The senior FSN is retiring at the end of 2004. One other experienced FSN left earlier this year. The two replacement hires have less than six months experience combined. We are evaluating the feasibility of bringing a TDY FSN from another similar post with experience in visas 92 and 93 for

the purpose of training our FSNs.